Teaching Tip • January 18, 2018

Promoting Student Engagement: Building community in the classroom

Learning is a dynamic process in which we make meaning out of new information as connected to what we already know. Learning is also often a social process, as students feel more engaged in classrooms in which they know they are welcomed and contributing member of the community. But how do we build community? Researchers have provided us with some building blocks to do so:

- **Pronounce names correctly:** Names are often one of the first words we recognize as children. They are given by our caretakers in remembrance of revered family members and in hopes that the meanings or qualities of the name will be imbued in the children. As such, names are personal! One strategy for learning students’ correct pronunciations is asking them to phonetically spell their name. Once you do so, ask the student to say it, and then practice it in front of the student. If you make a mistake, apologize, and try again. If you use Canvas, you can ask students to provide a video introduction. Read more strategies for learning how to pronounce names via the Getting Names Right: It’s Personal web post (http://bit.ly/2mKs6kq).
- **Promote civility:** How can one feel welcome and learn in an environment if there are disruptions that stem from a lack of consideration and respect? It is not too late to add a statement to your syllabus that clarifies expectations for behavior. The Mindful and Learner Centered Syllabus Checklist includes examples of inclusive, professional and mutual respect statements, including links to resources for instructors, staff, and students. All of this may be found on CELT’s Creating an Inclusive Classroom website (http://bit.ly/celltclusion). Remember, if you do update your syllabus, be sure to inform your students in a timely fashion.
- **Be consciously inclusive:** We know from decades of research that the frequency of faculty-student contact inside and outside of the classroom promotes student motivation, perseverance, and success. When you enter the class, do you welcome the students? As possible, arrive to class a few minutes early and plan to remain in class until the last student leaves. Ask students if they are encountering any difficulties with the assignments or the technology. Let them know something about yourself and how you entered the field. Consciously decide to be inclusive and speak with as many students as you can, not just the ones that consistently raise their hands.

Many of us spend considerable time considering the design of our courses, determining the knowledge and outcomes we want students to leave our classes with so that they are prepared for their next steps in their academic and professional careers. We spend time designing effective activities and assignments that students can show evidence of their learning. But how many of us spend time in properly getting to know and learning who the students in our classes are?

You can gain more ways to ensure your learning environment is designed to support and include all students by participating in CELT’s Conversation on Teaching Inclusively or the Inclusive Classroom Faculty Development Workshop via CELT’s Inclusive Classroom Programs webpage (http://bit.ly/celltinclusiveprograms).

All the best!

Sara Marketti, Interim Director
Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching

Upcoming CELT Programs

To learn more about our comprehensive array of events visit CELT’s Event and Registration website (http://www.celt.iastate.edu/events-registration) and register via the the Learn@ISU website (http://learn.iastate.edu/):

- Research Mentoring: Providing the opportunity to learn from mistakes, Jan. 23 (12:10 -1:30 p.m., 2030 Morrill Hall) will be presented by Basil Nikolau, Professor of Biochemistry/Biophysics & Molecular Biology and Margaret Ellen White Graduate
Faculty Awardee.

- The research-based flipped classroom - Team-Based Learning, meets for five consecutive Wednesdays: Jan. 24, 31, Feb. 7, 14 and 21 (3:30 - 5:00 p.m., 2030 Morrill Hall) will be presented by Holly Bender, Associate Director, CELT; Director, Preparing Future Faculty Program; and Professor, Veterinary Pathology.
- Sketchnoting for Visual Note Taking and more, meets for three consecutive Fridays: Jan 26, Feb 2 and 9 (12:10-1:30 pm, 89-90 Armory) will be presented by Verena Paepcke-Hjeltness, Assistant Professor of Industrial Design.
- Conversation on Teaching Inclusively, Jan. 30 (3:10 – 4:30 p.m., 2030 Morrill Hall)
- Hands-on with Team Based Learning: Simple activities to engage your students, Feb. 1 (12:10-1:30 p.m., 2030 Morrill Hall) will be presented by Lisa Orgler, Senior Lecturer in Horticulture, recipient of Iowa State University’s Award for Early Achievement in Teaching.
- Inclusive Classroom Faculty Development Workshop, Feb. 5 (2:10 - 3:00 p.m., 2030 Morrill Hall)

CELT-led Canvas Workshops

CELT staff is offering four 90-minute Canvas workshops multiple times this November to highlight the pedagogy and mechanics behind Canvas functions. Read the workshop descriptions on CELT's Event and Registration website (http://www.celt.iastate.edu/events-registration), determine which day/time you would like to attend, and register via the Learn@ISU website (http://learn.iastate.edu/):

- The Pedagogy of Canvas Quizzes: Jan. 25 (10-11:30 a.m.) or Jan. 30 (2 – 3:30 p.m.)
- Assignments and Grading in Canvas: Jan. 23 or 31 (10:00 – 11:30 a.m.) OR Jan. 17 (10:00 - 11:30 a.m.)
- Groups and Collaborative Work in Canvas: Jan. 18, 24 or Feb. 1 (2:00 – 3:30 p.m.)
- Course Design in Canvas: Jan. 22 (2:00 – 3:30 p.m.) or Feb. 2 (10 – 11:30 a.m.)

Canvas Open Labs

Bring your Canvas questions, and your laptop (this is a must) - no need to make an appointment. Open Labs are staffed with knowledgeable graduate students who can help you work on your Canvas courses on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. in the Rotunda of Parks Library, near our CELT office in 281 Parks Library.